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DECORATIVE ART IN LONDON.

BY HENRY B. WHARTLEY.

ON Thursday, the 30th of October, the doors of the International Health Exhibition were finally closed after having admitted, since May 8, 4,167,683 persons, or an average of 27,000 for each of the six working days in the week. During the last week or so, the number on the shilling days had risen to about 50,000, and with that number the crowd was too great to allow of sight-seeing being agreeable. Judged by these figures the Health Exhibition has been much more successful than the Fisheries, and that was considered a great success. To that, during the same period of time, 2,703,051 visitors were admitted.

This exhibition, which has been closed three months, was certainly one of the most interesting and instructive ever formed, and what was said in a leading article of the *Times* was quite true—that the crowds as they passed along looked bright and cheerful and not as is usual on these occasions, tired and dejected. There were two causes for this, first, that the fresh air of the gardens invigorated the visitors, and secondly, that when lighted up the galleries were as cool and well ventilated as in the day time. The arrangements for electric lighting were the most complete of any hitherto made in England. The specimens of lighting for rooms by incandescent lamps were in several instances quite perfect.

A considerable literature had grown up in connection with the exhibition in the form of hand-books, lectures, and reports of conferences. The hand-books deal with questions of health, dress, food, and education. One of these is an interesting account of "Schools of Art, their origin, history, work, and influence," by Mr. J. C. L. Sparkes, and the important hand-book on the London Water Supply, by Sir Francis Bolton, was so eagerly received that the whole edition was completely exhausted within a few days of its issue.

Among the subjects dealt with at the conferences, all more or less connected with the objects of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, were electric lighting in relation to health, sanitary construction of houses, epidemic diseases, and London water supply. The question is now being asked, "What is to be done with the surplus," and it has been suggested that the endowment of a properly furnished laboratory and the establishment of lectures for the training of public health officers might properly be undertaken with this surplus.

Not the least valuable, though not the most visited portion of the exhibition, was that devoted to the demonstration of certain important features of public health laboratory work.

One is reminded by these exhibitions of the old saying, "The king is dead, long live the king," for no sooner were the doors of the Health Exhibition closed than preparations were made for the reopening of these doors to admit the inventions of all Nations, and amid the bustle of removing the exhibits of the old show, the claims of those who desire to send their wares to the new one were being considered. Already the Inventions Exhibition may be said to be an assured success, and applications for considerably more than double the space at the disposal of the executive has been applied for.

The objects of the exhibition have been specially made known in your country, and it is hoped that the United States—which holds so high a place as one of the chief pioneers of invention—will be well and fully represented.

The exhibition will consist of two divisions, one being devoted to inventions and the other to music. In the first will be apparatus, appliances, processes and products invented or brought into use since 1862, and it is intended as far as possible that inventions generally shall be illustrated by models, which in the case of an entire machine may be accompanied by actual examples of the parts improved.

As the main object is the illustration of industrial processes, examples of either the raw material employed or the finished product will only be admitted when they are required for the full demonstration of a particular process, as very elaborate classification of the thirty-one groups has been compiled. It begins with agricultural implements and ends with toys and games.

Group 23, consisting of seven classes, is devoted to furniture and accessories. The second division

will consist of musical instruments and appliances constructed or in use since 1880; and printed and engraved music and machines and appliances for its production. There will also be historic collections of musical instruments, and of paintings and engravings representing musical subjects without any restriction as to date. So much for what we may expect to see in the spring of 1885.

In the middle of October an important conference was held by the Plumbers' Company at the Technical Schools, South Kensington, for the purpose of discussing the means to be taken for the more efficient regulation and registration of plumbers. After the reading of papers and much discussion, several resolutions were agreed to. The first of these was, "that in the opinion of this congress it is desirable that in future, architects should not include plumbers' work in builders' contracts;" other resolutions related to the revival of a system of apprenticeship, to the registration of plumbers, and to the sealing or mailing lead and solder of standard weight and quality.

At the Sanitary Congress and Exhibition held last year at Dublin, the opening address was delivered by the eminent sanitarian, Sir Robert Rawlinson, who specially alluded to the great question of sewage disposal. He said that the question of entirely freeing the Thames of sewage from Teddington to the North Sea is only a question of time, and he advocated the disposal of sewage in the sea by every large town on the sea shore. If it cost thirty or more shillings to utilize the valuable manurial elements in crude sewage by deposition with chemicals or in land irrigation to earn twenty shillings, he did not see the advantage of spending that money or that there was any waste in committing the sewage to the sea.

The Social Science Congress was held at Birmingham, and at it several artistic questions were discussed. One of the subjects was, "How can a love and appreciation of art be best developed among the masses of the people." Papers were also read on "Art education in Schools," and on "the place of art in the future political economy of the nation." In addition to these the president of the Art Department, the Right Hon. A. J. Beresford Hope, gave a very interesting address in which he exhibited the strength and weakness of art as exhibited in different styles of painting and of architecture.

The sixteenth annual exhibition of the Turners' Company was opened near the end of October, at the Guildhall. There are three sections, of which the first includes wood turning in hard and soft wood; the second, pottery (terra cotta, stone ware, and porcelain), and the third engraving in intaglio and cameo. The number of exhibits is one hundred and twenty-one and the number of prizes given is forty-four, but the judges were unable to award the highest prizes. The silver medal and freedom of the company was awarded in the third section to Mr. G. W. Garritt.

The architects are beginning to be busy and the newly-established society has held two meetings. It is proposed to obtain the help of county members, and the closing meeting of the session is to be held at Liverpool.

The Architectural Association has also had its conversation. There is much to talk about, for many important buildings are being erected in London and different parts of the country, in fact the pulling down of old places is quite the rage and soon there will be no antiquities left for us to look at except in museums. The decoration of the dome of St. Paul's with new mosaics in place of the paintings of Sir James Thornhill, to which we are all so accustomed, is still being discussed, but the new designs are not universally admired.

In connection with the Church Congress held at Carlisle, there was an Exhibition of Ecclesiastical Art. It consisted of a very interesting collection of about three hundred objects, including specimens of ancient and modern embroidery, wood carving, metal work, carved ivories, and rubbings of monumental brasses. Besides these there were seventy pieces of disused plate of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the churches of the diocese, and twenty pieces of corporation plate from the guilds of Carlisle.

A special exhibition of women's industries is to be held at Bristol in January, under the auspices of the National Society for the Promotion of Women's Suffrage. Among the arts which it is desired to exemplify are painting, sculpture, wood engraving, wood carving, modeling, furniture designs for decorative art generally, and for textile fabrics, lace, needlework, etc., will also be received.

The loan of ancient needlework and of other articles representing the occupation of women in past times is also invited, and it is hoped to form a loan exhibition of portraits of eminent women and of relics of interest connected with them.

Paris wants to have an art museum like ours

at South Kensington, and the president of the Union Centrale des Arts Decoratifs at a banquet, and in the presence of Mons. Ferry demanded, amidst much enthusiasm, the foundation of such a museum. It is highly probable that the Government will carry out the suggestion if the Chinese war now on their hands leave them any money to spend.

Several important courses of lectures on artistic subjects are now being delivered. Mr. G. Richards Julian is giving a series at the Crystal Palace on styles of architecture and their relation to the art of landscape gardening, and Professor Roger Smith addresses architectural students on "The Wall as an Architectural Feature." He has grouped his subject under these heads: 1, the wall as emphasizing construction; 2, as making construction; 3, varying the outline or place of the wall; 4, enriching the surface of the wall; and 5, color.

Mr. Ruskin is again at work interesting and instructing the students at Oxford. His subject is, "The Pleasures of England." In opening his course of lectures he explained that in speaking of the art of England he had considered art as the expression of the artist's power, and now in speaking of the pleasures of England he was about to look at works of art as supplying a certain demand outside of the artist and gratifying those who made the demand. He showed how much we owed to the teaching of the South, and this point is one which it is very necessary to insist on at this time when so much is made of our Teutonic origin.

The Anglo-Saxon had little artistic feeling, and the Englishman of to-day would be more behind-hand in the race than he is if he had no other blood in his veins. The titles which Mr. Ruskin has given to his lectures are very quaint, they are: "Pleasures of Learning," "Pleasures of Faith," "Pleasures of Deed," "Pleasures of Truth," "Pleasures of Sense," (Atheism), "Pleasures of Nonsense," (Mechanicism).

A hairdresser at Exeter has lately had a remarkable stroke of luck. He bought three water color drawings of Exeter Cathedral, measuring thirty-six inches by twenty-four inches, from a broker for £3. The drawings are now acknowledged to be the work of Turner, and the possessor has insured them for £3,000. The broker is said to have bought them originally for fifteen shillings. It is not said, however, whether they have been sold at £3,000, probably not for purchasers are not quite so plentiful now as they were some years ago. Still pictures sell better than landed property which seems to be very much of a drug in the market.

Three most interesting properties are now for sale, viz.: Stoke Park, at Stoke Poges, so intimately associated with the poet Gray, and two parks connected with two famous English battles—Bosworth Field and Flodden Field.

In concluding this letter I will allude to a curious little discussion which has been going on lately in a literary paper on some wooden seated chairs at the British Museum. A lady began the discussion by complaining that they were uncomfortable, but most others spoke in their defence, and one literary man said that he was certain that these chairs were the most healthy of all seats and the best for industrious readers.

This discussion brings to my mind a meeting I had some years ago with the famous Bishop Wilberforce, first of Oxford and then of Winchester. I was sitting in a famous library on one of these wooden seats, the only one near, when the bishop entered. Knowing as I did that he always sat on such a chair, I at once rose and offered it to him. The courteous manner with which he received, after first refusing it, and the delightful smile upon his handsome face, can only be appreciated by those who knew the personal charm of the distinguished man who was so unjustly styled "Soapy Sam."

THE ingenuity of some Viennese manufacturer has invented a decorative novelty in toilet soap. The soap itself is made in strikingly close imitation of familiar fruits, such as oranges, apples, peaches, pears, and the like, and put up by the half dozen, dozen, or more, in assorted lots, in fruit baskets embroidered in artificial leaves. As there is no reason why soap should not be pretty as well as useful, this fruit soap should become as popular as cleanliness itself.

